

(c) what is the present status of the process and the time likely to be taken for completing regularization of the panels?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING* OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No specific time frame could be determined because of the magnitude of the task although the Cell of the Ministry was constituted for an initial period of six months. Panels for seven years, i.e. 1984 to 1990 have already been finalised and notified. Considering the enormity of the task and complexity of the problem, it is not possible to indicate specific time-schedule for finalisation of the subsequent panels.

SC/ST higher echelons of administration

1329. SHRI VEN'BLE DHAMMAVIRIYO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 'Forum of SC/ST MPs in their representations submitted to the Prime Minister on 17th December, 1996, 1st September, 1997 and 23rd July, 1998 have demanded posting of adequate number of SC/ST Officers in the higher echelons of the Central Government administration;

(b) the number of posts of Secretary and equivalents thereof under the Central Government, including Public Enterprises and the number of SCs/STs working against such posts as on 1st January, 1996 and on 1st January, 2001 and their percentage as compared to the total posts; and

(c) the reasons for less representation, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Parliamentary Forum for SCs/STs had, among other matters, represented that conscious efforts

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be mounted to bring suitable individuals belonging to SCs and STs available in the Country to important posts including that of Secretary to the Government of India, in reasonable numbers.

(b) and (c) Appointment of officers belonging to SCs/STs at the level of Secretary/equivalent in Government of India essentially depends upon the number of officers belonging to that category who had joined the service over 32 years ago, their willingness for being posted in Delhi and their being spared for Central deputation. Eligible and available officers belonging to the SCs/STs are considered alongwith others for appointment to posts of Secretary/equivalent posts in Government of India and those found suitable and are available, are appointed to such posts. As on 1.1.1996 and 1.1.2001, 108 and 149 officers held posts of Secretary/equivalent in the Government of India respectively. As there is no reservation in the appointment at the level of Secretary to the Government of India, for officers of any caste/community, information on the number of SC/ST officers holding the posts of Secretary/equivalent is not required to be maintained.

Procedure to determine *inter-se* seniority of Section Officers

1330. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the procedure being followed for drawing *inter-se* seniority/eligibility list of officers appointed/promoted as Section Officers, for promotion as Under Secretary;

(b) whether at present, direct recruit Section Officers have been interplated with promotees who have put in comparatively much longer service;

(c) if so, what are generally the years of promotion as Section Officer with whom direct recruit Section Officers appointed during 1993-96 have been interpolated giving the position year-wise; and

(d) whether Government are applying their O.M. 35014/2/80-Estt (D) dated the 7th February, 1986 here, if so, to what extent and if not, the reasons therefor?